

september 2003
this issue

Open house

Confluence center

Tourism staff changes

Travel writers meet

division of tourism

North Dakota
LEGENDARY

commerce matters

Check us out

Since we're in the touring business, won't you let us take you on a tour of our new digs at Century Center?

North Dakota Tourism, and the Department of Commerce, is opening their doors to the public for an open house. Everyone is invited to tour the new office building at 1600 East Century Ave., on Wednesday, Sept. 10, from 4-6 p.m.

Refreshments will be served, entertainment provided and door prizes awarded. ●



Century Center, located at 1600 East Century Ave., in Bismarck, is the new home of the North Dakota Tourism Division and the North Dakota Department of Commerce. There will be an open house on September 10 to celebrate the move to the new facility.

Tourism staff attends ESTO conference

Tourism Division Director Sara Otter Coleman came away from three days of meetings at the ESTO (Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations) conference in Asheville, N.C., convinced that the state is headed in the right direction in its promotional efforts.

"Overall, the message we heard from the speakers validates the path we are on. Travelers are looking for genuine, real experiences in low-stress environments

and that is what we have to offer here in North Dakota," Coleman said. Tourism Communications Director Rachel Retterath also attended the conference, which included 45 of 50 state tourism directors and more than 400 convention and visitors bureaus. Speakers covered topics on E-marketing, working with advertising agencies and the future economics of tourism marketing.

"It was a productive three days," Coleman said. "It is always good to assess how your programs and issues compare to those of other states."

One of the more interesting trends discussed at the conference was the use of Web sites versus travel guides. Many states are reducing the number of printed travel planners due to short planning cycles and increasing use of the Web. ●

Bucking the trend

While many states are reporting decreased use of printed travel material, North Dakota Tourism has had a run on information, both printed and on the Web. The division printed 250,000 copies of the 2003 travel guide, and as of September 2, all 250,000 copies have been distributed.

With a new marketing blitz planned for 2004, and increased exposure from various print media around the country, the division is gearing up for an even bigger 2004 season by printing 350,000 travel guides. The new guide is in production with printing scheduled for mid-December.

Confluence center has grand opening

The new Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center near Williston opened the weekend of Aug. 23-24.

The \$2.2 million interpretive center tells the story of the confluence of these two mighty rivers from the same magnificent view

that Lewis & Clark Expedition members enjoyed when they visited North Dakota in 1804 and 1806. "The center will help us tell North Dakota's legendary story in a fun and educational manner. It is a

great example of the continued

growth in attractions throughout the state," North Dakota Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman said.

The building has a gift shop and museum store and two display galleries. Permanent exhibits at the Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center will explain the geography and geology of the area, its prehistoric life and the impact of people arriving by trails, tracks, rivers and roads. Featured will be the Lewis and Clark journey, the fur trade era, Fort Buford and the development of the modern-day irrigation and energy industries.

"The new interpretive center serves as a great platform to educate visitors about the history and the importance of the two rivers in North Dakota," said Merl Paaverud, director of the State Historical Society. ●

Tourism staff at full strength

North Dakota Tourism now has the proper force to deliver the marketing punch it needs to bring visitors to the state. With the recent addition of **Annette Schilling** to fill the Lewis and Clark marketing coordinator position, North Dakota's Tourism Division is fully staffed with



The Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Visitor Center opened to much fanfare and celebration. The new center, located near Fort Buford and the confluence of the two mighty rivers, is the latest addition to the Lewis and Clark Trail.

employees in each of its program departments.

"We are poised to move forward and really energize our efforts with the Legendary campaign in each of our programs. All of Tourism's employees are using their skills and experience to highlight North Dakota as a must-see destination," said Sara Otte Coleman, Tourism Division's director.

As the newest addition at Tourism, Schilling will focus her skills on promoting Lewis and Clark in North Dakota. She has worked in marketing and the tourism industry in Minnesota, Alaska and different areas in North Dakota. Schilling has a bachelor's degree in public relations from North Dakota State University and a master's degree in management from the University of Mary.

Schilling said she looks forward to marketing the Lewis & Clark Trail and all of the assets North Dakota offers. "It is exciting to be part of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. It's a great opportunity to really showcase such an interesting and important part of North Dakota's rich heritage," Schilling said. She will join the Tourism Division Sept. 15.

Tourism has undergone many changes in responsibilities in the past six months. **Rachel Retterath** moved from the Lewis and Clark coordinator position to take on the communications director position, and **Deanne Keller** took on the duties of marketing director of group travel. Keller gained her experience with the division as a travel counselor and will use that experience to help sell and plan itineraries for groups coming to the state.

Fred Walker is a new hire who spent five years promoting Jamestown before going global as Tourism's international marketing director. A lifelong North Dakotan and graduate of Jamestown College, Walker worked as the marketing and sales manager for Jamestown Promotion and Tourism before joining the State Tourism staff. **Tricia Miller** and **Lisa Bjerklie** were both hired in late April to help with administrative duties. As a data coordinator-administrative assistant, Miller works with Tourism's databases, statistics and assists with communications. Bjerklie joined the division as travel counselor-adminis-

trative assistant, and administers call center operations and fulfillment and provides travel counseling services to potential visitors.

Other Tourism Division employees are **Mark Zimmerman**, outdoor marketing director; **James (Scooter) Pursley**, information specialist; **Cheryl Purdy**, administrative staff officer; and **Gloria Hedahl**, part-time travel counselor.

Coleman said, "Our neighboring states have double and triple the staff we have at North Dakota Tourism, so our 10 full-time employees must work very smart to drive more visitor traffic to North Dakota." ●

Missouri River Festival and Symposium

The festival highlights the Missouri River's livelihood over the past 200-plus years and looks ahead to its role in the future.

The event includes scholarly programming, cultural events, recreation, workshops, Chautauqua, daytrips and Lewis and Clark Hospitality Training.

For more information, contact the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau at 701-222-4308. ●



Travel Tidbits

Tourism presentation available

👉 Looking for an overview of the Tourism Division's program and marketing activities? If so, we have a powerpoint presentation available that highlights research findings and Legendary brand strategy. It also shows our promotional materials, marketing tools and more. The presentation ends with points on how you can partner with the Tourism Division. For more information on this presentation, contact communications director

Rachel Retterath at 701-328-2532. ●

She's the president

👉 Deanne Keller, group travel marketing director for North Dakota Tourism, is currently serving as president of 2 Nations Tours. She will remain in her post until May 2004. 2 Nations Tours is a consortium between North Dakota, Minnesota and Manitoba, Canada, created to promote the region as a tourism destination. ●

Travel writers meet in North Dakota

It took 50 years to lure the Midwest Travel Writers Association to North Dakota, and the 28 members attending the annual convention in Bismarck-Mandan left asking themselves one question: What took us so long?

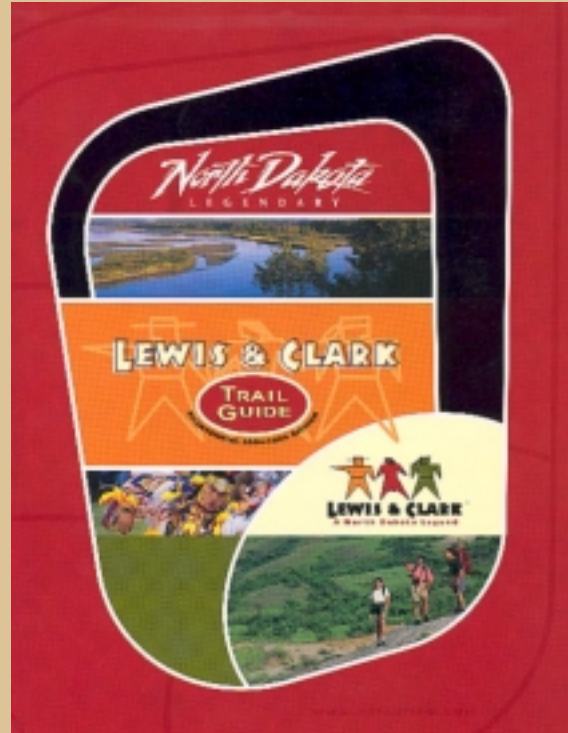
Bismarck-Mandan CVB and North Dakota Tourism Division hosted the fall meeting of the MWTW, an organization of travel professionals who strive to, among other things, foster communications between travel writers and readers and championing the cause of travelers from the Midwest.

In addition to attending professional development seminars, members of the group took in a Lewis & Clark Riverboat excursion and dinner, toured the North Dakota Heritage Center and the State Capitol, visited the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and Fort Mandan at Washburn and Knife River Indian Villages at Stanton, and golfed Hawktree Golf Course in Bismarck. Others went birding in central North Dakota, pontooning on the Missouri River, canoeing with BirdWoman Missouri River Adventures at Washburn, touring at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park (including a pitchfork fondue dinner), and visited Prairie Knights Casino and Resort. ●



Members of the Midwest Travel Writers Association take in the view of the Great Hall at the North Dakota Capitol during their recent convention in Bismarck. (Mike McCleary photo)

Trail guide updated



The updated Lewis & Clark Trail Guides are printed. Call or stop by the Tourism Division at 1600 East Century Ave., in Bismarck to pick up your supply.

National Guard band looking for venues

The Air National Guard Band of the Northwest (560th Air Force Band) is offering its services in 2004 to venues celebrating the Lewis & Clark Expedition. The concert band is available for performances that are free and open to the public.

In addition to the concert band, there are a number of smaller performing groups, including a 20-piece jazz band, five-piece woodwind, brass and saxophone ensembles, a German-style polka band and small jazz group. These groups may also be considered for separate events.

Contact John Brogan of the Air National Guard Band of the Northwest at 509-247-7090 for more information.

Email: john.brogan@wafair.af.mil. ●